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Littleton Public Schools

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Littleton High School Cafeteria Debuts Today's Fresh Catch Program



*Jamey Lionette (left) of Red's Best watches as senior Aly Ramirez examines a monkfish on display at the kickoff of the LHS Today's Fresh Catch lunch program.
(Courtesy Photo)*

LITTLETON -- High school students arriving for lunch last Thursday morning took longer to grab their seats, as many of them took a detour to explore a table of locally sourced fish and seafood that was on display.

The display, which allowed students to examine fish up close and in person, was part of the kickoff celebration for Littleton High School's inaugural Today's Fresh Catch lunch. The new pilot program provides students with access to sustainable seafood from the waters off the coast of Massachusetts.

"I thought the level of freshness was just amazing, and as a chef this is something I wanted to explore," said LHS Cafeteria Manager Marylou Kelly as students sat nearby eating the Atlantic Pollock that was caught off the shores of Gloucester earlier this week. "We wanted to bring in something that was new, that's never been done before."

Kelly and members of her team visited the Red's Best pier in Boston last fall to see where the fish they'll now be serving once or twice per month -- to start -- comes from.

She also said the cafeteria staff would experiment with a variety of recipes, including fish tacos and more.

Through Red's Best, Littleton High School will now receive whichever locally caught fish is most abundant in a given week, helping to keep costs down for the district while providing a living wage for New England's fishermen.

"We're always looking for ways to expand our menu offerings to students and encourage them to try new recipes," said Superintendent Kelly Clenchy. "This is a welcomed partnership with a vendor that provides new food choices for our students, and supports our local and state economy."

Each of the lunch tables was adorned with an informational sheet, including a QR code, that students could scan to learn more about the fishermen that caught their meal.

Jamey Lionette from Red's Best was on hand Thursday to talk to students about the fish they were being served and show off a variety of other species that may be on the menu in the future.

"This gets kids excited about local fish, and everyone who works in a kitchen would rather work with fresh fish," Lionette said, adding that the program helps stabilize wages for fishermen while allowing students to learn about where their food comes from. "All of a sudden, your lunch room is now educational."

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Food Service Director John Overcash garnishes a row of trays with locally sourced Atlantic Pollock in the Littleton High School cafeteria. (Courtesy Photo)



Jamey Lionette talks about seafood with a group of students, including (from left) senior Emily Smith and sophomores Ryan Kitain, Jackie Carboneau (in red and white) and Jenna Corbett (far right). (Courtesy Photo Littleton Public Schools)




A variety of seafood, including shellfish, was on display for students to see first hand during their lunch. (Courtesy Photo)

JAN. 17

RED'S BEST

ATLANTIC POLLOCK

Atlantic pollock, *Pollachius virens*, is regularly caught by New England fishermen. It is a nutritious, delicious option that helps sustain livelihoods of our local fleet. Pollock is a smart seafood choice because it is sustainably managed and responsibly harvested under US regulations.





AVAILABILITY
Landed from Maine to Virginia, pollock is available mostly year-round but peak landings are from November through January. Fishing rate is at recommended levels.

FLAVOR & TEXTURE
Sweet and delicate taste with a firm white flake, pollock is a great option for fish stews and chowders. Primarily a winter fish in New England, pollock is versatile and a great substitution for cod, haddock, hake.

HEALTH BENEFITS
Atlantic pollock is very low in saturated fat and is a very good source of protein, vitamin B12, phosphorous and selenium.

MEET YOUR FISHERMEN
Fisherman: Stephen Weber
Species: Pollock
Vessel: Hotreels
Gear Type: Hand Line
Port: Green Harbor

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Credit: Photo credit: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Each lunch table had a fact sheet with more information about the fish being served that day. (Courtesy Photo Littleton Public Schools)

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